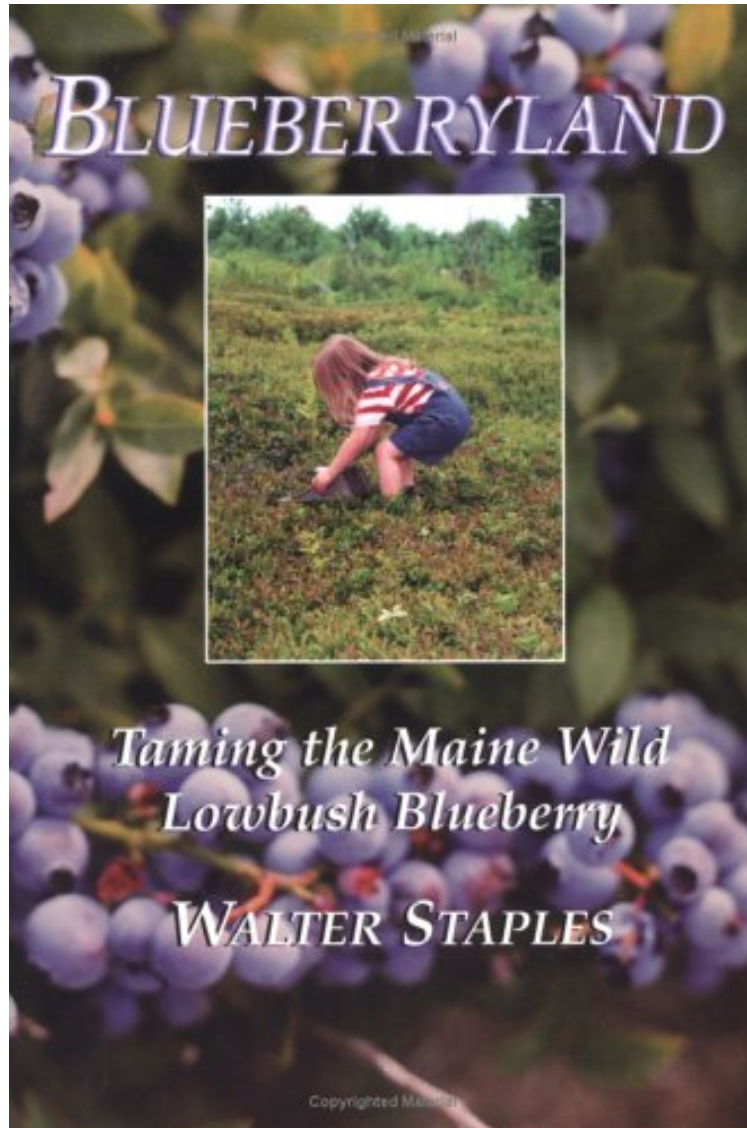


[Pdf free] Blueberryland: Taming the Maine Wild Lowbush Blueberry

Blueberryland: Taming the Maine Wild Lowbush Blueberry

Walter Staples

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Walter Staples : Blueberryland: Taming the Maine Wild Lowbush Blueberry before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blueberryland: Taming the Maine Wild Lowbush Blueberry:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Holli brooks Diohep3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. From Blueberry Nirvana to Blueberry NightmareBy CustomerThis book is a personal history of lowbush blueberry farming in Washington County, Maine. The author, Walter Staples, was a frequent visitor to the region as a young child, when he accompanied his father on hunting, fishing, and blueberrying trips. He later

purchased some land in Wesley, Maine to use as a base camp for hunting and fishing. When he made this purchase, much of the acreage was being used for commercial blueberry harvesting, and he deeded the rights to the commercial harvest to the previous owner, Shirley Guptill, for as long as Guptill was able to rake the berries. When Guptill became too old to rake blueberries, Staples began learning the trade himself. In this book, Staples relates a number of hunting and berry picking stories, as well as some of his adventures and misadventures as a commercial blueberry harvester. He provides some interesting anecdotes about the local history of Wesley and the development of the commercial blueberry industry in Maine. The book also includes some statistics and press releases from industry publications, some poems on blueberrying and some old family recipes. What is most attention-grabbing is Staples' personal account of the transformation of blueberrying from family enterprises to agri-industry. At the beginning of his tenure in the fields (1980), berries were raked by hand and fields were maintained with the addition of hay and regular burning. Expenses were minimal, and profits from a few weeks' work were significant (\$3582.79). But by the 1990s, production protocols had come to require application of herbicides, fertilizers and mechanical raking. All of these additional inputs came at significant expense, while the resulting glut in the blueberry market meant that the returns did not keep pace with expenses. By 1990, Staples was losing money through maintaining and harvesting his fields, rather than gaining a respectable bonus to his yearly income. By then, the only way to make money in blueberries was to lease the fields at a minimal price to commercial growers, or consider organic alternatives. What becomes clear is that the term "wild blueberry" when referring to the Maine agri-industry product is no more accurate than the term "red delicious" apple. In this case, "wild" is simply used as a synonym for low-bush, to make the product sound natural, which it clearly is not, from Staples' description. Staples includes a number of interesting anecdotes of blueberry country in the book, and some fascinating details about the development of the blueberry industry, but the presentation of the stories, poems, can be a bit disjointed at times. However, interested readers can piece together a remarkable personal story of a family industry being subsumed by big business. Others may simply enjoy the tales of rural Maine and the delicious blueberry recipes. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. of natural beauty and human nature

By A Customer
As someone who has periodically travelled through downeast Maine, passing through miles of seemingly tractless spruce forests and barrens, I have wondered who lives there, and why. This book captures the answer to that question in a way which edifies the reader about the history and quaint charm of the region. Moreover, the book also suggests how people in similar circumstances find livelihoods, community, and even survival in the most unexpected places. A wonderfully educational and insightful read that makes the reader long to visit the region...those who do will find an austere beauty, hardy people, and newfound respect for the spirit of human enterprise... and they are likely to return to the area, as did the author.

What Walter Staples had intended was for this book to be a compilation of unusual circumstances, anecdotes, and stories from his personal experience during a period of twenty years of managing a relatively small blueberry farm. It has become a description of an intimate association with the people and the land of the small town of Wesley in Washington County, Maine, a town not unlike every other blueberry growing town in the state. The industry developed over a period of fifty years from berries picked for family use to more than 100 million pounds produced annually and marketed internationally. The history of lowbush blueberry production in Maine is the story of 500 or more homesteads pioneered in the 1700s by settlers in a twenty mile-wide band inland and extending the entire length of its Atlantic coastline. Blueberries were one of the more widespread and plentiful berries, and the local Indian tribes had long before discovered the mother lode situated on the barrens. This was a near treeless area of eskers and meadows at the western edge of what has become Washington County along its boundary with Hancock County. Settlement was pressing inland from the seacoast villages during the 1700s, but it was not until the 1900s, when railroad transportation had penetrated the area and factories had learned to preserve the berries by canning, that blueberries became of economic importance and the growing area extended beyond the barrens. Staples gives a holistic view of the love affair with blueberries which he shares with the residents of his native state Maine. He does this in a wonderfully readable way by mingling personal stories, and facts and figures provided by the Maine Cooperative Extension Service, with recipes for treats as; Wild Blueberry Bundt Cake, Wild Blueberry Cobbler, Blueberry-Apple Jelly, and Wild Blueberry Muffins. Blueberryland gives a true taste of Maine.

From the Publisher
6 x 9 trim. About the Author
WALTER STAPLES, a native of Maine, is a retired researcher for a major New England poultry breeding company, retired blueberry farmer, and an avid trout fisherman. He has published numerous poems, short stories, and articles in newspapers and magazines. He is also the author of *The North Bay Narrative*, the story of a remote fishing village in Newfoundland.